Hansel and Gretel

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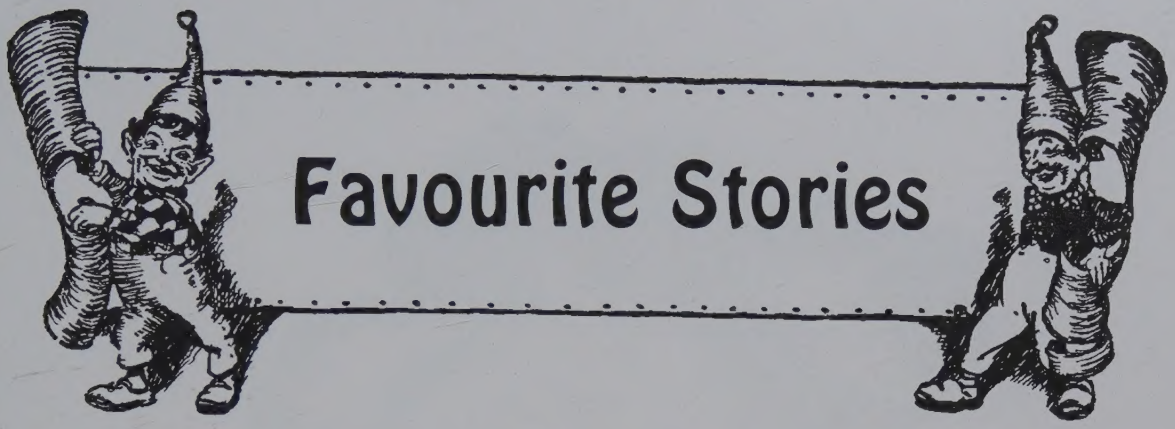


In this series:

Red Riding-Hood
The Babes in the Wood
Old Mother Hubbard
Old Dame Trot & Her Pig
Hansel & Gretel
Little Jack Sprat
Jack & Jill

Hansel and Gretel

Once upon a time there lived a poor Woodcutter with his wife and two children, Hansel and Gretel.

There came a time of great famine, and the Woodcutter, at his wit's end what to do, was discussing with his wife, who was the children's Step-mother, how they were to feed them.

"Take them into the heart of the forest," said she, "and tell them to play together whilst you go and work elsewhere. Leave them and do not return – they will never find their way home again."

FRANK ADAMS

For a long time the Woodcutter would not consent, but she gave him no peace, till at last he agreed one night to do as she said. The children, who could not sleep for hunger, overheard them, and Gretel was very frightened, but Hansel comforted her, saying he would find a way to save them both.

FRANK ADAMS

In front of the house there were many white pebbles which glittered in the moonlight and Hansel, while the old people were asleep, slipped out and filled his pockets with the stones.

FRANK ADAMS

Next day, going to the forest, Hansel kept stopping and looking back, and every time he stopped, he dropped a white pebble. Deep in the wood the parents lit a fire and went away, telling the children to wait till they returned. The babes fell asleep and slept till dark. Hansel said:— "When the moon rises, the stones will lead us home."

When they reached home, the Stepmother pretended to be angry because they had slept so long in the wood, but their father was glad to see them again.

FRANK ADAMS

But another famine came, and the Stepmother again persuaded her husband to take the children to the wood and leave them. This time Hansel could not get any pebbles because the door was locked, but he crumbled the bread they had given him and dropped it along the way. As before they were left by the fire, waking again at night. But the birds had eaten all the crumbs and the children were lost.

For hours they wandered till, tired out, they slept again, and awoke to find, on a bush by them, a beautiful white bird, which flew away singing, as if inviting them to follow.

FRANK ADAMS

Filled with a new hope they hastened after it.

Suddenly they came upon an open space in the forest, in the midst of which stood a wonderful white house. The white bird perched on the roof and when the children came near to it they found that the cottage was made of bread, with a roof of beautiful cakes, while the window panes were all of barley-sugar, instead of glass.

PANCAKES!!!

Overjoyed, Hansel broke off a piece of roof for Gretel and taking a pane of barley-sugar for himself, they sat down to enjoy their feast. Suddenly, while they ate, there came a voice from within, saying:—

"Munching, crunching, munching!
Who's eating up my house?"

But the children, too hungry to be frightened, answered:—

"The Wind, the Wind,
only the Wind!"

and went on eating as if they never meant to leave off.

FRANK·ADAMS

Then the door slowly opened and a strange old Woman appeared, leaning on crutches. She smiled kindly and said:—

"Come in and stay with me, my dears, and no harm shall come to you."

She led them in and gave them a beautiful supper of pancakes and sugar, apples and nuts, and milk to drink.

Then she showed them two little white beds and tucked them in.

FRANK
ADAMS

ut next day the old Woman shut Hansel up in a stable that had a barred door. Then she made Gretel fetch water to cook food for him, because he was to be fattened and then eaten. Poor Gretel wept bitterly but had to obey.

Every morning the Witch went to the stable and told Hansel to hold out a finger, so that she could feel it and see if he was fat enough. But she was very dim-sighted and Hansel used to hold out a chicken bone. The Witch wondered why he never seemed to grow fatter.

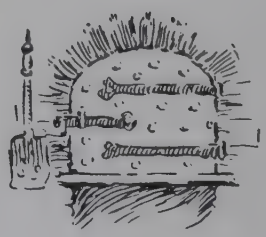
FRANK ADAMS

After four weeks she got impatient and told Gretel:—

"Go fetch water, for, fat or thin,
I mean to eat Hansel!"

But first, she said, they would bake some bread. She told Gretel to get into the oven to see if it was hot enough, meaning to shut the door on her and cook her too.

But Gretel pretended she did not know how to get in, so the old Woman put her own head inside to show her. Gretel quickly pushed her right in: then, shutting the door, she rushed away to set Hansel free.



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Now that the Witch was dead, the children went all over the cottage looking at everything and came at last to a little room in which was a number of great iron chests. They got the Witch's keys and, on opening the chests, found them full of most wonderful jewels, pearls and diamonds and many others. So they took as many as they could carry of the beautiful things and, leaving the cottage, started to try to find their way home again.

FRANK ADAMS

After a time they reached a wide and deep stream, over which they could not cross. But they saw a little Duck swimming near and begged her to help them. The Duck said she would take them over, one at a time, on her back, and so they were able to cross safely.

QUACKS FERRY
MRS DUCK
TEAS
PROVIDED
MINERALS
FRANK ADAMS

When they came to the wood on the other side, they recognised the path as one that led to their home and, filled with joy, started to run as fast as they could.

FRANK·ADAMS

Bursting open the door, they flung themselves into their father's arms, who, poor man, had sorrowed much for them and, their stepmother having died, was overjoyed to see them again.

Enriched by the jewels which the children scattered in handfuls all over the floor, their troubles ended and they lived happily ever afterwards.

FRANK ADAMS

KIDDIES
GIVEN HERE
PANCAKES!!!
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